

MEMORANDUM

October 10, 1980

To: Files

From: E.C. Whitehead

At 4:00 p.m., Thursday, October 9th, Dr. Lewis Thomas, Dr. David Baltimore and myself, met with Dr. Gray, President, Dr. Provost and Dr. Eugene Brown, of the Department of Biology at M.I.T.

The discussion first concerned institutional arrangements. In principle, the M.I.T. people had no objection and in fact, had precedents for free-standing institutes in their organization. They have no problem with an independent Board. They felt it would be desirable for MIT to have representation on that Board and that this could be one or two people. They were enthusiastic about the whole notion of the type of Institute that we were proposing.

The sticker here is obviously space. There appears to be no unoccupied land on the Campus that could serve as a suitable site.

There is at present a program to replace some old and somewhat dilapidated buildings with a Humanities Center. This is a favorite project of Jerry Weisner's. The project has been approved in principal by MIT but unfortunately, sufficient funds for its execution are not yet available. After the meeting, David told me privately that he was under the impression that the project would cost \$22 million and only \$4 million had been raised so far. However, they still had another year to go. The reason this is of significance is that the site selected would be a prime site for the Institute.

There appeared to be two other possibilities, neither one of which are 100% desirable.

There is land rather near the existing Cancer Center which is presently occupied by three elderly and somewhat dilapidated buildings that do not belong to MIT, both on the campus. If we could acquire these buildings, the site might be useable. For those readers who know the MIT Campus, the Cancer Center and the Whittaker School form an "L". The site would be the interior of the "L". There are three problems with this site:

1. The cost and difficulty of acquisition from the present occupants.
2. The city is building a subway which would be directly under this site, which in one sense could be desirable but from the standpoint of noise and shaking, could be undesirable.
3. The University and the city government have an agreement that when the University acquires land which was formerly on the tax rolls, the University continues to pay taxes at a decreasing rate each year, down to no taxes. If we could acquire a site on the Campus, there would be no real estate tax implication but if we acquire a site that is presently paying taxes, there would be a tax liability.

The second possibility is a new development across Main Street, facing the back of the Campus. However, here we have the seemingly insurmountable difficulty of taxes. Simple arithmetic tells one that if a building costs \$30 million dollars and the tax rate would be approximately 6% of market value (present rates) we would impose a burden of \$1.8 million a year, which to me is much too much.

The other disadvantage that it is contiguous to rather than part of the MIT Campus.

We discussed the MIT Administration perception of an independent Institute on their Campus. Interestingly, they are more tense about having an Institute near the active center of the Campus. The further away from the active center it is the less tense they were.

I proposed that as a "quid pro quo" for the site, we might be willing to build additional space to house congenial MIT scientists (i.e. members of the Biology Department) for let us say 25% of our building. This would have the advantage for MIT of providing additional space and a tighter relationship to our scientific group. The advantage to the Institute is tighter linkage to the University. They seemed very responsive to this idea.

They asked what sort of programs we are contemplating, which we told them. They were curious about the past history of the Institute which we clarified, etc. It seems absurd that 90% of our meeting was on site and 10% on the real guts of the Institute, people and program.

They had had only five days to consider this matter and admitted that the look as to the site possibilities had been somewhat superficial. They promised to get their planning officer to have a much harder look and hopefully, come up with other site alternatives.

PAGE THREE

It was suggested during the meeting, almost facetiously, that we could take the site of the four existing tennis courts which are right in the best part of the Campus. Provost Low, particularly, protested as there are at present, a shortage of tennis courts on the Campus. Afterwards, we discussed facetiously, that we could build our building and replace the tennis courts on the roof. In thinking about it, this is possibly not such a stupid idea, as the loss to the Campus would be zero and the gain in useable building space, would be enormous.

By copy of this memo, I am asking David to pursue this idea.

ECW/mlt

DISTRIBUTION

Dr. D. Baltimore

Mr. Arthur Brill

Dr. J. Lederberg ✓

S. Peerce, Esq.

Mr. M. Segal

Dr. L. Skeggs

Dr. H. Sokol

Dr. L. Thomas

Mr. J. Whitehead

Mr. P. Whitehead

Ms. S. Whitehead